

THE MOJO NAVIGATOR

Vol. 1 No. 5

"...a strange Effluvium..."

Wed., Sept 7, 1966

GRACEFUL exclusive GREAT interview

PART TWO

MOJO: What did you think of Jim Gurley's guitar playing the first time you heard it?

GARCIA: Well, the first time I heard it, I was in no position to comment about it, or you know... (laughs from the rest of the Dead) I don't know. I like it. Some of the time I like it. I think that his approach to it is a lot different than mine; he plays with fingerpicks you know; I play with a flat pick. I like his playing.

MOJO: He hasn't been playing the same recently as he did when he started...

GARCIA: That's true, but I think that's largely because of his amplifier, which he's been complaining about to some extent...

MOJO: And his wrist...

GARCIA: Well you know, I mean those guys are pretty new at electric instruments and...

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE: You're all busted for loitering.

GARCIA: Oh, go away... and they still have to get used to what comes out and what doesn't come out... I don't know, I think they

EDITORIAL

A REPLY TO THE ORACLE'S "INDO-ROCK ARTICLE"

It is with some trepidation that I sit down to write this week's editorial. As the editor of the Mojo Navigator R&R News I have expected a good deal from the San Francisco Oracle in the way of material clarifying and exploring what's going on here in the way of rock, knowing what we at the Mojo have done with limited time and money, and seeing the obvious good intent and intelligence of the people at the Oracle.

Unfortunately the Oracle's first article on the scene, titled
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NEWS.....RUMORS.....GOSSIP

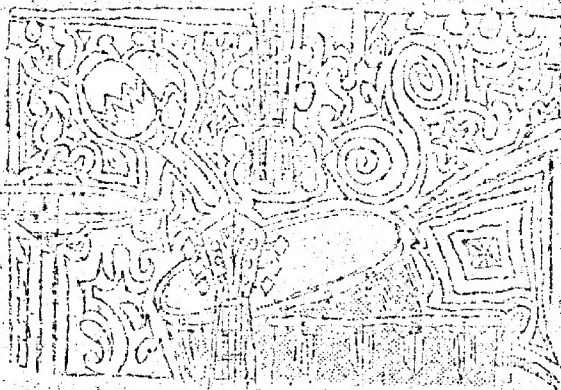
The Mystery Trend is rumored to be with Tom Donahue recording for Warner Bros!....Bill Graham says Paul Revere & the Raiders will not be appearing at Fillmore and that he will not book anymore rotten Top-40 shows...The Jefferson Airplane has returned from Chicago,
(continued on p.2)

playing at a pretty decent level you know, backing up Jan and Dean or...

GARCIA: (laughs) Well, here's the thing: it's these guys that are good musicians and they're playing what they think is bad music and because they think it's bad music it is bad music, they get paid for it, but you know where is that? It's like having any other kind of job, it certainly doesn't seem very rewarding. I really respect everything we do: I can't play anything besides what we play, really: I'm not a jazz guitarist.

MOJO: What about recording in San Francisco...?

GARCIA: I think it's starting to develop into... there are two or three good studios, I think there's two or three four-channel machines and I think more bands are going to want to record in the city because just the conditions of living in L.A. are so lousy, I wouldn't record down there.



MOJO: The thing I was thinking of is for a recording scene to develop here like they have in New York, where somebody like Al Kooper can make a pretty good living just playing in the studios and turn out good records.

GARCIA: I don't think that San Francisco recording as it is can really support any studio musicians. I don't think there are any in town.

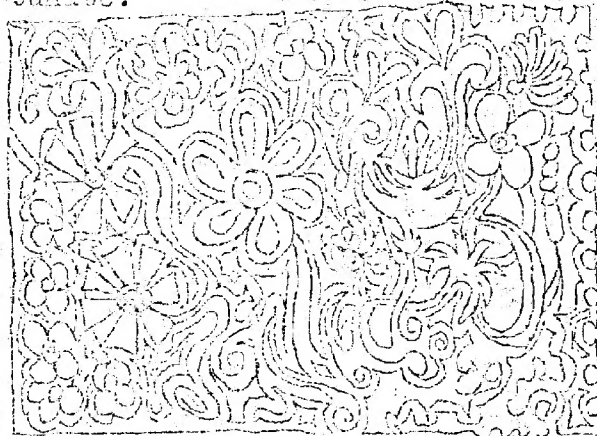
WIER: Anyway it's a group thing. The whole idea is a group thing, pretty much, because each group is unique.

MOJO: What about studio technicians?

GARCIA: There are engineers in town; there aren't any A&R men that I know of, none... with a few of the smaller companies there are...

MOJO: Is it this thing of they want to change your sound for you?

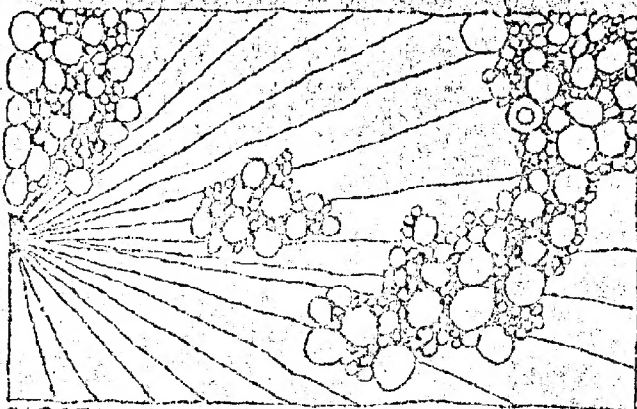
GARCIA: Well, what an A&R man usually does, his usual function is to produce, to make whatever material you have that's potentially saleable more saleable, by suggesting maybe some changes or whatever... a good, I don't know how far that gets into because I haven't really observed that many recording sessions, but frequently A&R men don't have much taste and don't really understand a group or who they're working with or anything like that and as a result sometimes records'll have the sound of the A&R man rather than the group. And that's unfortunate.



MOJO: Something like what happened to the Jefferson Airplane, or what RCA Victor tried to do to the Jefferson Airplane?

GARCIA: Yeah, kinda uhh... well, you know, just little things like the guy playing glockenspiel on "Come Up the Years" or whatever. That was the A&R man, you know it was his idea, thought it'd be cute or something... but you can get your record contracts, you can get, if you work 'em right, so that you have the artistic control. In other words you can do your material the way you think it should go.

MOJO: Was the Scorpio Records that you were on the same Scorpio Records that somebody called the Golliwogs recorded for?



GARCIA: Geez I don't think so, it was just the first, or actually the second record put out by this guy or rather the independent producer that we're working for.

MOJO: If not it's a funny coincidence because a record came out just about the same time as your record called "Brown Eyed Girl" by the Golliwogs, and it made the charts, and it wasn't a bad record actually.

GARCIA: Well, what happened with the Scorpio label was that the guy went ahead and applied for it, had the labels printed up and everything like that, but after the record came out and after he had the labels out they discovered that there was some other label named Scorpio, so the big clearing house, wherever it is, said "No, you can't use that name." So at any rate I don't think our next record will be out on Scorpio, I don't know what the label'll be. Could be a major company, we may work a thing like that. Record it here and then...

MOJO: Lease the masters?

GARCIA: Yeah, something like that.

MOJO: O.K., so you're going to Chicago next?

GARCIA: November.

MOJO: November you're going to Chicago, and you'll be around here for the next few months.

GARCIA: Right, playing whatever we got, I think we're booked up.

MOJO: That's good; booked solid.. What kind of a deal do you work out with Chet and Bill, anyw-? Who gets the bread?

GARCIA: We arrange for a price and we're paid for a specific

amount; it'd agreed upon in the contract and everything like that. MOJO: And it isn't based upon the door intake?

GARCIA: No, they could, you know, if we wanted it that way we might be able to work it but...

WIER: The union wouldn't like that very much...

GARCIA: Yeah, I don't think the union would go for it. See, the union is insisting that you get half your pay in advance.

MOJO: You're in the union?

GARCIA: Sure.

MOJO: What kind of a hassle have you had with them?

GARCIA: Well, the usual hassles. The hassle is that there are unscrupulous promoters in town (actually there's only one) is a, you know, been hiring bands that are in the union and paying them ridiculous amounts of money. And it looked pretty, for awhile they were demanding that Chet and Bill you know, the guys that are legitimate, they were demanding that they pay half the pay for the bands in front, a lot of things like that, really picayune and stupid things, I think. But we really, went down there enough times and gave them a bad enough time often enough so that they haven't been hassling us too much lately.

MOJO: That must have been interesting.

GARCIA: All the bands in the city were doing that, I mean it was it really was, you know, rock 'n' roll bands usually don't have any other source of income, and when it might mean if you don't get paid on the night you play you might not eat for the next few days, and we weren't getting paid until Wednesday of the following week, we'd have to go down to the union and get the money, and so forth, and it was really, you know, more than inconvenient, it was stupid as well.

WIER: Besides that they took more than they should get, they took something like 20%. And a, who needs it?

GARCIA: Don't go putting down figures, man, they didn't take no

ALBY

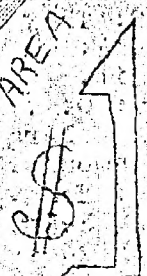
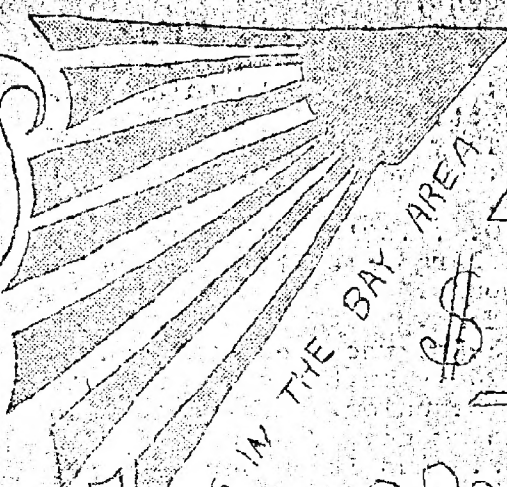
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20 percent.

WIER: They took it from the Quicksilver.

GARCIA: No, I don't think 20% could shot.

WIER: They did.

GARCIA: Oh well, man, I wouldn't say it.

MOJO: O.K. let's just say they took a large amount, a substantial amount.

MOJO: Yeah.

WIER: Yeah, who needs it when it never does anything for us, you know, the union, and all it does is take money from us and bum kick us. And it never gets you any jobs.

MOJO: Do you guys know of any groups in other cities that are doing stuff that's comparable to the San Francisco sound, the type of music we're doing here?

GARCIA: I don't know what the other groups in the other cities are doing, there's a lot of stuff that sounds like... well, it sounds like it could be San Francisco groups, the 13th Story Elevator...

MOJO: Floor.

GARCIA: ... the Thirteenth Floor Elevator, they're supposed to be up at the Avalon this weekend, their sound is like a San Francisco sound sort of, a little like Big Brother.

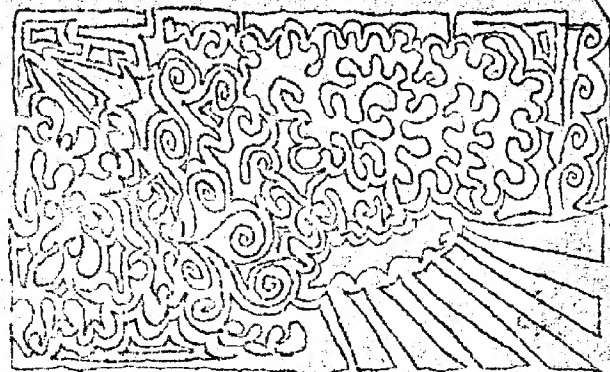
WIER: Oh there's a lot of groups around. I mean it's not really, I wouldn't go so far to say it's San Francisco sound so much as a San Francisco scene.

MOJO: Yeah, well it's the new sound in rock 'n' roll that's happening here.

WIER: Yeah, it's happening here but it's happening in other places too.

GARCIA: The thing is that there are a lot of really imaginative people around here and each of the bands sounds different from each other as it does from everybody else, and you know the San Francisco bands aren't alike at all really. But that's the thing about it; like the L.A. bands are all very similar.

MOJO: There are groups like Thorin's Shield in L.A. that nobody there knows about, they come up



here and do a set every once in a while and they're doing stuff which is really different...

DIFFERENT MOJO:the Rising Sons. You talk to people from L.A., they don't know about the Rising Sons.

GARCIA: The Rising Sons have broken up.

MOJO: Oh have they? When was this?

GARCIA: I don't know, I think it was awhile ago.

MOJO: They're such a good group.

GARCIA: They were (laughs).

PIGPEN: They're going to be on Elektra now, Elektra's putting together some kind of blues package.

MOJO: Oh really, maybe they got the tapes from Columbia, cause Columbia had all kinds of things from them.

GARCIA: Yeah, it's possible, there's no telling...

MOJO: Do you have any last message for all the little kids out there in the world who read our publication, all them little teeny boppers...?

WIER: Yeah, we could use some hard-workin' honeys up at the house.

THE REST OF THE DEAD (in chorus): YEAH!

MOJO: We'll put that on the masthead...

WIER: Put an ad in the paper for a, "Come one, come all healthy, well-fed young honeys, willing to do work, and a..."

GARCIA: Take care of...

WIER: Take care of the group, preferably with their own money and stuff like that.

PIGPEN: Their own money, their own cars, and 18 years old.

MOJO: I'll see what I can do. Thanks a lot!

Last week's rock & roll party at 1090 Page is worthy of comment for several reasons. One is that the Freedom Highway put on a performance the like of which is seldom seen anywhere in this city. They were in top form last Wednesday, and the tapes of them that we made are so good that we are seriously considering putting out a record. One song in particular, "Ooh, My Soul", was done better than I have ever heard the Holding Co. do it. The Freedom Highway is playing rock harder and faster than any other group I know of right now.

Another interesting aspect of the 1090 parties is the open jam sessions before and after the band plays. Interesting because they are terrible. They've all been pretty bad, but last week's was really scungent. There were about eight people on stage and all playing a different song. This jam session idea isn't working out at all and I hope Larry Johnson will realize it before long.

The most interesting aspect of last week's session, however, was two guys who got up and played together at the end of the party. Mike Lamb played guitar and sang, and Will Scarlette played harp. They sounded really fine together, though they aren't a formal group and have no plans for doing anything together to any great extent. They will probably be there again this week and they are worth seeing. I'm told that they will also be playing at the Jabberwock in Berkeley this Sunday.

Greg Shaw

GOSSIP, continued from page 1

apparently they were well received and the scene there is pretty groovy; they played L.A. too... The Grateful Dead are now in the process of cutting a single, with an album projected to be out around the beginning of November... Group B from Sacramento have changed their name to Andrew Staples... The Flax Project cancelled their Avalon engagement and will play straight through at the Matrix, due to the good crowds there...Correc-

(continued on p.8)

EDITORIAL, continued from page 1

'Indo-Rock', is a piece which both misses the point of the music and is in itself an example of how easily the music can be mis-understood. Some examples:

"the music played by groups such as the Grateful Dead, the Great Society, Big Brother & the Holding Company, and the like... is a rhythmic music played by people who are essentially musically illiterate."

"These bands for the most part don't swing. They pound, they hammer, they chug along like freight grains. The beat is closer to German beer hall music than to jazz -- cowboy music with a loud drummer."

And what does the unnamed writer of the article wish to see in local R&R bands? "the gentleness of Clifford Brown, the quick nuances of Bird, the exaltation of Coltrane." In other words, this article constitutes an attack by a jazz buff on a music which he doesn't understand, for anyone who has been listening to and understanding the music can feel those nuances, that gentleness, that exaltation in the music of "illiterates" like Darby Slick, Jerry Garcia, Jim Gurley, or for that matter in the music of anybody in the three groups that he specifically put down.

To put it quite bluntly, look out who you call an illiterate. Care to name anybody on the local jazz scene who plays better guitar than Jerry Garcia, better bass than Phil Leish, anyone who sings better than Grace Slick, or perhaps someone who plays better drums than Bill Sommers or Jerry Slick? And that is not even the basic point which the anonymous writer at the Oracle misses; the real point is that one cannot write a criticism of a music which alienates one from the outset; it is absurd for someone who doesn't seem to like rock 'n' roll to try to evaluate the merits of various bands. I view such "criticism" in

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GOSSIP, continued from page 7

tion: when the Thirteenth Floor Elevator cancelled out at the Fillmore, they were replaced by Country Joe & the Fish, not the Messenger Service...the first issue of Avalanche, an offset Berkeley poetry magazine, came out recently. In their 3rd issue, out in a few months, they will have material dealing exclusively with rock & roll....A newspaper, edited by Lou Curtiss and Jim Prickett (of SPIDER), modelled on the Barb, is being started in San Diego. The Fugs will play in San Diego and there are several places in town with light shows now...Hedy Best will be playing electric bass in a San Diego group being formed which will be doing Tolkien songs and arrangements....Dino Valenti is back and will be at F.O. Kuh Memorial Auditorium Wednesday, Sept. 14. The San Francisco Calliope Company has been dormant but is now "gathering steam to make another move." Which will probably come about in October. Rock & roll will be involved, it will probably be free, it will probably be out in the open, and it will probably last all day

EDITORIAL, continued from page 7

the same light that I view Trotsky's writings on Stalin.

I expect much more from the Oracle in the future; I hope it is not too much to ask that a publication based in the Haight-Ashbury hire someone who digs good R&R to write their criticism for them. Dave Harris

I caught the debut performance of the Outfit at the Dragon a Go Go last night; they are a good group who will really profit from playing in the kind of working conditions a club offers. What they basically need to make them a top quality band is work, and undoubtedly they will be getting plenty of that playing several sets a night.

Their first set consisted of originals, all of which were well written. Although their lead guitarist has only been playing lead with the group for a few weeks, they have already achieved a unique sound. What they basically need is stronger work from the lead and the confidence in the musicianship which constant playing provides. The second set, which varied between originals and other people's songs was quite good.

Within a relatively short time soon the Outfit should be one of the best and most commercial rock bands in the city. Dave Harris

GOSSIP, continued

or all of several days....Watch for several new musical things happening in Berkeley before long....the new Paul Butterfield album came out yesterday....
HAPPENING: At Avalon this week, The Great Society and the Quicksilver Messenger Service. At Fillmore, the Mothers and the Oxford Circle. Coming up is the Byrds next week (13) and then Butterfield, Muddy Waters, the Airplane. Tonight (the 7th) R&R party at 1090 Page. The Outfit every night at Dragon a Go Go, 8:30 - 12:00.

COMING IN THE MOJO NAVIGATOR: Interviews with the Charlatans, the Quicksilver Messenger Service, the Outfit, Country Joe & the Fish,....